

Abstract of the Disclosure

An intravascular catheter system includes an intravascular catheter that can be easily and safely navigated through severely occluded arteries. The system uniquely includes both an optical fiber for use in providing data for guiding the catheter and a conventional metal guide wire for use in navigating the catheter through the artery passageway. The system further includes optical imaging of the arterial occlusion during guidance of the catheter through the artery passageway. More particularly the system provides a visual indication to the surgeon to determine if the catheter assembly is approaching the arterial wall.